



# Family News

January/February 2003

News and Information for Families of individuals at Muscatatuck SDC and Madison State Hospital during the transition to community-based services.



## Earned Income Tax Credit: Claim the Money You've Earned

As tax time approaches, it is the goal of the Family and Social Services Administration to ensure that all potentially eligible individuals and families are aware of and utilize the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for working individuals and families with low incomes. To get the credit, individuals and families must file the appropriate tax claim and reporting forms. Those who have not utilized the EITC in the past may back file to be considered for up to three-years of retroactive claims.

The credit amount is based upon family size and income. For earnings from 2002, the EITC could provide as much as **\$4,140** to working families with incomes up to \$34,178.

These refunds could make a substantial difference in the lives of many Hoosiers. Unfortunately, many eligible individuals and families do not claim the credit, either because they haven't heard about it, don't know they are eligible or don't know how to apply.

During the current tax season, January to mid-April, FSSA will be working to get information about the EITC to staff and

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(EITC, cont. from page 1)*

## Secretary Hamilton Responds to Questions About Group Homes

**Q** How are group homes (supervised group living facilities) for persons with developmental disabilities regulated?

**A** Group homes must comply with the federal Medicaid certification requirements for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICF/MR). These regulations are contained in the code of federal regulations.

**Q** What makes group homes unique from other residential options in Indiana?

**A** The state licensing requirements make group homes unique. There are a number of other places that must also meet Medicaid certification requirements for ICF/MRs. So, while the Medicaid certification requirements greatly determine various characteristics of a group home, they do not make group homes unique from other options. Many of the state licensing requirements are for the physical environment. For example, group homes should be in a residential neighborhood and, they should not be closer to each other, a workshop or a nursing home than 1,000 feet. Homes that existed before the requirement was in place or that received permission from the licensing council based on the merit of the request are exempt from this requirement. Group homes should be furnished like typical family homes, no more than two residents shall share a bedroom, and individuals are encouraged to display personal possessions.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## **“Five Rs” of Dealing with Change-Related Stress**

*Relax* – it might be through deep breathing, meditation, or visualization exercises. Try to temporarily “park” your problems. Don’t think about them constantly. Take time out for a pleasant diversion. Exercise and commit to a healthy lifestyle that includes plenty of rest. And always try to maintain a sense of humor.



*Reflect* – on your feelings about what is happening. Don’t try to hide or discount your feelings, especially the negative ones. But do understand the effect that negative behavior can have. Negative thoughts and behavior can spread to the people around you. Seek support from peers and family, and never be critical of how someone else is dealing with change. Use any available resources to help you sort out what you’re going through. It is smart to ask for help.

*Reassess* – assess your feelings and find someone you can talk to about them. Separate what you know from what you don’t know. In other words, dispel rumors. They will only increase your stress. Let go of guilty feelings about what could have been done. Develop a new vision of yourself and accentuate the positives.

*Rehearse* – review the steps you have decided to take in dealing with change. Prepare in advance for uncomfortable situations. Think about possible questions, how you’d answer them, and what you would like to say about what’s going on. Rehearsing helps alleviate stress and anxiety.

*Ritualize* – keep your life as normal as possible. Maintain established routines. Continue regular family activities. Rely on

and seek comfort in the things that are constant in your life. Seeking out the familiar is an instant stress reliever.

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## **Financial Management Tips**

Have you ever thought about what a \$1,500 charge balance on a credit card adds up to? If you paid 19% interest on a \$1,500 amount and only paid the minimum required monthly payment (2-3% of the balance), it would take 17 years to pay it off. You would have paid back more than double what you charged! If this sounds unbelievable check out the credit card payoff calculator at [www.bankrate.com](http://www.bankrate.com) and prepare to be astounded. (source [www.nelliemae.com/finman/credit.html](http://www.nelliemae.com/finman/credit.html))



### ***Guarding against credit card fraud: The Do’s and Don’ts***

#### ***Do:***

- Sign your cards as soon as they arrive.
- Keep a record of your account numbers, their expiration dates, and the phone number and address of each company in a secure place.
- Keep an eye on your card during the transaction, and get it back as quickly as possible.
- Void incorrect receipts.
- Destroy carbons.
- Save receipts to compare with billing statements.
- Open bills promptly and reconcile accounts monthly.
- Report any questionable charges promptly and in writing to the card issuer.

(Continued on page 5)



## **Governor's Commission Interim Report Submitted** (Part IV in a Series)

The Governor's Commission on Home and Community-Based Services was established to develop short and long-term strategies to create and expand home and community service options. The service options will be directed to persons at risk of being institutionalized or for those currently in a nursing home or other institutional setting. This work is intended to complement - not duplicate - the work already being accomplished.

The Commission was charged to produce both an interim and a final report for the Governor. The interim report has been completed and was forwarded to Governor Frank O'Bannon. Although the work of the Commission continues, it was determined that some actions can be taken immediately with little or no fiscal impact or regulatory obstacle. The interim report includes those recommendations as well as others that will require more time to address.

Other recommendations - with a fiscal impact, facing regulatory obstacles or otherwise complex and/or difficult to implement - will continue to be addressed by the Commission. Once the work of the Commission is completed, recommendations will be included in the final report to the Governor. This report will be submitted in June of 2003.

You may view the interim report at:  
[www.in.gov/fssa/community/](http://www.in.gov/fssa/community/)

## **Laughter Is The Best Medicine**

People with a good sense of humor enjoy many benefits, both physically and emotionally. Specifically, humor can promote health by:



- ☺ Reducing Stress. Laughter, like crying, is a form of catharsis. It provides an outlet for you to relieve feelings of stress and anxiety.
- ☺ Increasing Oxygenation and Circulation. Studies show that laughter provides many physiological benefits. It causes a temporary increase in your heart rate and blood pressure which aids in the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to your entire body.
- ☺ Aiding your Immune System. Laughter helps the body produce new immune cells faster. A boosted immune system will help you fight-off many illnesses, including colds and flu.
- ☺ Reducing Pain. Several studies have shown that exposing people to humorous experiences significantly increases their ability to deal with pain. When you laugh, your brain releases endorphins—the body's natural pain killers.
- ☺ Improving Quality of Life. Regular, healthy doses of humor and laughter can enrich your life in many ways. Studies have shown that people with a good sense of humor tend to be less stressed-out, anxious, and depressed.
- ☺ Encouraging Communication. Because our society places high value on a good sense of humor, laughing can help us better relate to other people. This can increase a person's sense of community and belonging.

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## **Nikki Ciazza Morrell Named Director of Southeast Region**

Family and Social Services Administration Secretary John Hamilton has chosen Nikki Ciazza Morrell to lead the agency's 18-county Southeast Region. Morrell has been with FSSA's Division of Mental Health and Addiction since 1993.

Morrell has a comprehensive background in mental health services -- beginning as a charge nurse in an acute admissions unit to her current post as Superintendent of Madison State Hospital.

It's that experience, Hamilton said, that makes Morrell a strong director to oversee the Southeast Region and its focus on providing community-based services and working closely with a Southeast Regional Advisory Panel.

FSSA is establishing eight service regions to coordinate services for people with disabilities, mental illness or addiction. The Southeast Region was the first. Planning for the next two regions is underway in Central and Northeast Indiana.

"Our Regional Services effort doesn't focus on buildings -- it focuses on the services people need in their communities," Hamilton said. "I am confident Nikki is the person to make sure we deliver those services in the Southeast Region. The Regional Center in Madison, the area's surrounding communities and the soon-to-be chosen advisory panel will benefit from her guidance."

At the Office of Client Services, Morrell rose from Care Coordinator to Superintendent. She was responsible for the coordination, planning and operations for six state hospitals in Indiana.

Morrell will continue to serve in her role

as Superintendent of Madison State Hospital.

Morrell received her B.A. in English from the University of Massachusetts in 1975; her A.D.N. from Holyoke Community College in 1979; a B.S.N. from Fitchburg State College in 1982; her M.S.—Psychiatric Nursing from Boston University in 1986; a Certificate in Management from the University of Connecticut in 1991; her Advanced Practice Licensure (CT) from the University of Connecticut in 1992; and her Masters in Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University in 1996.



## **Southeast Regional Center Update**

The planning for and development of the Southeast Regional Center (SERC) is "on schedule" and set to begin construction/renovation in April 2003. Four of the six identified "bluff buildings" (those overlooking the Ohio River) will be renovated to ensure treatment modalities and historic preservation requirements are met. Two other buildings will be demolished but rebuilt on site to maximize efficiency and effective patient care. The majority of this 150 bed facility will be interconnected allowing efficient circulation of staff and residents.

The initial phase of the project -Planning-included programmatic user group meetings held last spring with members of three architectural design firms (Indianapolis based— Ratio Architects, Inc., St. Louis based— Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, Inc., and New York based consultant-Architecture +). To enhance this planning

component, patients, family members, and advocates received a questionnaire and/or then attended a specialized meeting with the design team. Family members and advocates were able to propose several key areas of focus that would enhance the therapeutic environment/design and, ultimately, ensure this center's status as a state-of-the-art treatment facility. All involved were grateful for the opportunity to provide input.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the project - Schematic Design- kicked off in June and continued through August. The State Office Building Commission (SOBC) has approved the schematic design. The architectural team, with the guidance of staff, is well on its way to completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the project, Design Development. The 4<sup>th</sup> and final phase -Construction Document- is slated to begin early in 2003.

Internal administrative office moves are underway at Madison State Hospital to clear the path for pre-construction assessments and demolition. There will be no need to interrupt or displace clients during the construction.

This SERC project will be Leadership in Energy & Environment Design certified and will meet or exceed the Governor's Green Indiana Program requirements, becoming one of the first of its kind in Indiana.

The collaborative efforts of the design team, SOBC, staff, and consumers have enabled this progress and are indicative of what can be done with a common vision. We predict the completion of the Southeast Regional Center in 2004!

**NOTE: Visitors will need to register at the Southworth Activity Therapy Building (AT building) when arriving on campus.**

(Fin. Mgt., continued from page 2)

### ***Don't:***

- Lend your card(s) to anyone.
- Leave cards or receipts lying around.
- Sign a blank receipt. When you sign a receipt, draw a line through any blank spaces above the total.
- Write your account number on a postcard or the outside of an envelope.
- Give out your account number over the phone unless you're making the call to a company you know is reputable.

(Source: [www.ftc.gov/bcp/menu-credit.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/menu-credit.htm))

### ***Reporting Losses and Fraud:***

If your credit card is lost or stolen, immediately call the issuer. Many companies have toll-free numbers and 24-hour service to deal with such emergencies. By law, once you report the loss or theft, you have no further responsibility for unauthorized charges. **In any event, your maximum liability under federal law is \$50 per card.** If you suspect fraud, you may be asked to sign a statement under oath that you did not make the purchase(s) in questions.

(Source: [www.ftc.gov/bcp/menu-credit.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/menu-credit.htm))



There are three major credit reporting agencies:

- Equifax: 800-685-1111
- Experian (formerly TRW): 888-397-3742
- Trans Union: 800-916-8800

**Disclaimer: We are not financial advisors – the above is reflective of research on the topic. Everyone is advised to seek professional financial help when needed.**

## **Suzanne Finneran Clifford to Head Mental Health and Addiction**

Family and Social Services Administration Secretary John Hamilton has chosen Suzanne Finneran Clifford to lead the agency's Division of Mental Health and Addiction. Clifford will join FSSA in February, moving into the post held from 1998 to 2003 by Janet Corson, who retired January 10.

Clifford comes to FSSA with an extensive track record of management experience. Since 1992, she has worked in various leadership positions at Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly and Co., developing and implementing strategic marketing plans and re-engineering Lilly's drug development processes.

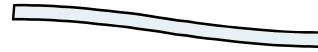
Hamilton said that experience makes Clifford a strong leader to oversee the Division of Mental Health and Addiction and its focus on providing more community-based services.

"Our Division of Mental Health and Addiction is critical in helping Hoosiers receive the assistance they need," Hamilton said. "I'm confident that the Division will greatly benefit from Suzanne's leadership."

At Lilly, Clifford most recently built and led a global team of medical and marketing professionals charged with understanding and addressing schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. She also established and led an external advisory board of psychiatrists, primary care physicians, pharmacists and nurses who partnered with Lilly to address mental health issues.

Clifford received her B.S. in Engineering from Ohio State University in 1989, and her Masters in Business Administration from Indiana University in 1995.

"I look forward to the opportunity to help FSSA coordinate and provide quality community-based services for those dealing with mental illness or addiction," Clifford said. "It is an honor to be chosen by Secretary John Hamilton to head the Division of Mental Health and Addiction."



### **Training Update**

\$546,383 has been invested in training 445 MSDC Employees  
- an average of \$1227.83 per person.



clients who may be eligible and encourage them to participate and file the appropriate forms. For more information call 1-800-829-1040 or visit the following web sites:

FSSA EITC web site at:  
[www.in.gov/fssa/eitc/index.html](http://www.in.gov/fssa/eitc/index.html)  
or the IRS web site at:  
[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

*(Q & A, continued from page 1)*

Generally speaking, the additional state licensing requirements are for the purpose of requiring an environment that is more like a typical home or for the purpose of requiring additional safeguards, or for providing additional benefits that are not already required by the Medicaid certification requirements.

**Q** How many people are in each group home?

**A** According to Indiana Code, group homes have a capacity of 4 to 8 individuals.

**Q** How is the performance of group homes monitored?

**A** Group home annual surveys are conducted by the staff of the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), Long-Term Care Division. At these surveys, homes are examined to see if they are in compliance with all of the federal Medicaid certification requirements, and with all of the state licensing requirements. If a particular group home is found to be out of compliance, then the agency providing this home must follow the procedure to demonstrate that they have come back into compliance. If they are unable to do so, they could lose their Medicaid certification for that particular group home. If they lose their Medicaid certification, then they will not meet the requirements to have their state license renewed.

If the ISDH receives a complaint about a group home, then they will go to that address to investigate the complaint.

**Q** What should a person do if they are concerned about the care given to an individual living in a group home?

**A** In many cases, the person who has the concern should first try to work with the

agency that is providing the group home service. The group home provider agency has an obligation to work with guardians, advocates, healthcare representatives, etc. on the care of an individual and to include them in appropriate ways. An involved family member or guardian who has a loved one living in a group home should be prepared with information about who they can contact, including supervisors, administrators, and the executive director of the provider agency.

There is one other individual who also needs to be aware of family and guardian concerns. The district BDDS office will have an individual responsible for placement who will assist and should be kept apprised of any concerns.

If the concern is a complaint, then they can call the Long-Term Care Division of the ISDH at 317-233-7442 and ask to speak to an individual to take their complaint. The ISDH is required to investigate all complaints they receive.

If the complaint is also a suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, they should also call Adult Protective Services (APS), at the local area office or the toll-free statewide number 1-800-992-6978. An involved family member or guardian who has a loved one living in a group home can ask the district BDDS office or the group home provider for the number of the local APS office so that they will be prepared should they ever need to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.



### Keep In Mind

MSDC/MSH Info Hot Line:  
**800-903-9822**

Div. of Disability, Aging &  
Rehab Services:  
**800-545-7763**

Ombudsman: **800-622-4484**

Div. of Mental Health &  
Addiction:  
**800-901-1133**

“Great discoveries and achievements  
invariably involve the cooperation of  
many minds.”  
— Alexander Graham Bell

### Inside This Issue

- Director Named for Mental Health and Addiction
- Director Named for Southeast Region
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Financial Management Tips
- “Five R’s” of Dealing with Stress
- Governor’s Commission Interim Report
- Laughter Is The Best Medicine
- Questions & Answers with Secretary John Hamilton
- Southeast Regional Center Update

### Future Issues

- ◆ FSSA Regional Planning
- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Your Ideas

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